



# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 12 No.1

Spring 2007

Greensburg, Indiana

**EPIGRAPH** -Try writing American history with no reference to waterways or to the bridges which cross them.

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
There the embattled farmers stood,  
And fired the shot heard 'round the world."

Emerson: *Concord Hymn*

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### Judge Andrew Davison (1800-1871)

*Reprinted from the Greensburg Standard Feb.9,1871 issue,*

*Edited by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian, Jan.19,2007*

*This is 6th in a series of Obits about some of the early settlers and some later well-known men and women who lived and died here and are buried here in Decatur County. They are the ones who helped shape Decatur County into what we have today.*

It becomes our sad duty to announce the death of Judge Andrew Davison, of this City, who for a period of forty-five years has been one of its most prominent and honored citizens. Although he was well stricken in years, and somewhat feeble, this announcement will be a surprise to his numerous friends in Decatur and throughout the State. He was seized with an attack of Inflammation of the Bowels, which, in the short period of a week hurried him to the grave.

Judge Davison was born at Chambersburg, Penn., Sept. 17, 1800, and was the son of a Presbyterian minister. He entered Franklin College, Cannonsburg, Penn., at seventeen, and graduated at the age of twenty one years. Having finished his Collegiate course, entered the law office of Hon. Thomas H. Crawford, of Chambersburg, who afterwards was appointed to a high Judicial position under the Administration of President Polk. Here he remained about three years, and being in poor health, with the hope of improving it, he concluded to make a trip West on horseback; but started with the expectation of returning to Chambersburg to engage in the practice of the law. He traveled through Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, and, on his return, reached this place in the spring of 1825, and after mingling a few days with its pioneers, concluded to locate, and "grow up with the town," and from that time forward he has been identified with its interests.

His success at the bar was marked, and for a period of twenty-five years he occupied a leading position. It was as a careful, hard-working, technical lawyer, rather than as an advocate, that he was known. He was always accurate; and his pleadings, we are informed, were models of brevity and directness, and scrupulously neat, a blot or a scratch scarcely ever appearing; a fastidiousness that most lawyers now-a-days would do well to cultivate.

April 15, 1839, he married Mrs. Eliza Test, the widow of Hon. John Test, once a prominent lawyer and politician of this State, who survives him.

(Continued on page 4)

### 2007 Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday February 24th—6:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church

Dinner \$10.00 per person

See page 2

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

BY DAVID MIERS

The last two years have flown by and now it's time for the annual meeting and the election of new officers and board members. The annual meeting is scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> of February at six o'clock in The First Presbyterian Church. The nominating committee will present a slate of five new board members who will be replacing Kathryn Bailey, Rheadawn Metz, Ed Deiwert, myself and filling one open position. The new members who will be presented for your vote are Lynda Smith, Bryan Robbins, Polly Matlock, Dennis Wilson and Jim Rosenberry, Jr. I would also like to thank the retiring members for their dedicated service to the Society. Their input has been valuable and very important to all the decisions we have had make during the last several years. Also, you will be electing new officers. The nominating committee will be presenting Tom Barker for President, Linda Volk for Vice President, Debbie Greiwe for Treasurer, Charity Mitchell for Recording Sec. and Diana Springmier for Corresponding Sec.

As always nominations for Board members and officers may come from the floor during the meeting.

During the last few months the Board has been reviewing the By-Laws. There are a few changes the board is recommending to the by-laws, most for which are very minor, correcting, or clarifying. But there are two items I would like to especially mention.

First, the Board felt that the Museum Director should be an "ex officio" non voting member of the board. This is to provide a liaison between the Board and the Museum.

Second, was that the officers must be elected from the Board of Directors. As the by-laws are written today members other than Board of Director members may be elected as officers.

If you would like to see the changes, copies are available at the museum during normal operating hours and will be available at each table at the annual meeting. These changes will be voted on by the membership at the annual meeting.

I would personally like to thank the Board and all the volunteers for all the help they have been to me during the last two years. We are blessed with having these two groups that have a tremendous passion for the preservation of our Decatur County History, the Museum and the Society. They are an asset we are very proud of.

Finally thank you for letting me be your President through the most exciting time our Society has ever experienced. It has been a wonderful experience.

Thank you

David

### Annual Membership Dinner Reservation Form

**Jerrold Wilson will present a program on the Lewis Clark Expedition**

**Dinner prepared by the women of the First Presbyterian Church**

**Reservations due by Monday, February 19th**

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Number of Dinners Reserved at \$10.00 each\_\_\_\_\_

Send to Annual Dinner - Historical Society of Decatur County, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240

The Greensburg Public Library and the Arts and Cultural Council of Decatur County present acclaimed Hoosier photographer, John Bower, for a 2 part program on Saturday, April 21, 2007. Bower has three books currently in print and a fourth underway. For more information call Lori Durbin, Outreach Librarian at 663-2826.

*Museum Musings**by Diana Springmier*

The museum has been a beehive of activity since the fall reopening, and the volunteers and staff are quite involved in seeing that all is running as smoothly as possible.

The annual Christmas open house made the 1846 Victorian home and its annex come to life with seasonal music provided by the North Decatur Jazz Band and the Greensburg Middle School instrumentalists. Trumpeter Bob Rooker and vocalist Emma Springmier were accompanied by Willadene Wood who played a keyboard brought in for the affair, pending restoration of the south parlor's baby grand piano. Gladys Pike again provided the bread pudding, directing her grandchildren, Katelyn and Jeff, from a wheelchair - the result of an early fall broken leg - in serving the pudding. Society ladies baked cookies and other treats for the laden dining table. Above all of this downstairs merriment was the upstairs gallery's showcasing of the local Lionel train club's exhibits for children to enjoy with parents and grandparents who vicariously relived their childhood.

The popular trains were also enjoyed by 100 North Decatur fourth grade art students during an early December visit when the students, their teachers, and accompanying parents filed out of their bright yellow school buses on North Franklin Street. They viewed the ornaments each had made in class which adorned the north parlor's beautiful fir Christmas tree which was donated by Bohman's Tree Farm. The young people were also taken on a tour of the rooms brimming with antique toys, and Charity Mitchell also introduced the students to the archival area of the annex. This was a truly wonderful visit as those adults at the museum saw the enthusiasm of the students as they stepped back into a Christmas past. The experiences also afforded the children an opportunity to learn something about their place in their family's history. It's never too early to foster some interest in genealogy. All of the extensive Christmas displays were under the direction of Reed Schuster, Ginny Garvey, and Nita McCoy.

Revisiting the subject of art, Greensburg's elementary art students, 400 of them, visited during a week in November to view the Hoosier Art Salon Exhibit, sponsored by the Arts and Cultural Council of Decatur County. The students, under the guidance of teacher Margaret Parker, sketched their favorite painting in the exhibit.

Between the September dedication of the restored museum and the end of the Christmas holidays, approximately 1000 visitors toured the facility. How fortunate Decatur County is to have this building to showcase and secure its history.

Early in the new year, sixth grade Girl Scout Troop 9 and leader Carol Blankman will tour and then work on the scouts' Heritage Merit Badge requirements in the meeting room of the archival area. Plans for the February Hearts and Hankies Valentine's Tea celebration will be held in the parlor rooms, which will be festively decorated for the event. Jane Brown will be doing the catering, and Helen Hamilton will present the program. Additionally, Delta Kappa Gamma, a woman's educators group, will have its February meeting at the museum. Certainly the more our facilities are used by the community, the more the community will realize the many contributions the Historical Society makes to Decatur County.

The museum's winter hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 10: a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and by appointment at other times.

The museum's volunteers are having something of a respite before the April opening of our Spring season which will feature new exhibits to welcome school tours and our many other visitors to a facility all Decatur County can be proud of.

# Think Spring!

(Continued from page 1)

In politics he was always a Democrat, but never an active partisan. Indeed he had few of the qualifications of a latter day politician. He was retiring in his disposition, independent, and mingled little with the multitude. He therefore lacked the popular manner which usually distinguishes the politician. His isolation from general society was not the result of selfishness; it came rather of his diffidence and habit of thought. He had intimate friends, entertaining. Those who knew him best speak, without exception of the warmth and kindness of his heart. He was honest—everybody felt this—no man who knew him, we presume, ever entertained a suspicion that he could be influenced by the arts of corruption.

In 1852 he received the Democratic nomination for Supreme Judge, and was elected on the ticket with Judges Perkins, Stuart and Roache; all of them, we believe, still living. He was re-elected in 1858, and in all, served twelve years upon the Supreme Bench. He was again re-nominated in 1864, but suffered defeat along with his party, since which time he has lived a retired life. It was his reputation as a sound and thorough lawyer, and his sterling integrity, that called the attention of his party to him for the position; and it was because of his fitness, rather than anything he had done as a partisan, that he was chosen. His opinions were carefully studied, and will compare with any that appear in our Indiana Reports. These appear in the law libraries of almost every state in the Union, will go down to those who follow us as a part of the law of the country, and are his best monument.

He leaves behind him a reputation unsullied in either public or private life. His practice was lucrative, and although he was never a speculator, his investments were judicious, and with his simple habits, he acquired what may be called in the country, a handsome fortune.

Judge Davison was devoted to his family; it was in his home that his real character appeared to best advantage.—In 1860 his only daughter, Jennie, to whom he was most fondly attached, a very amiable and intelligent girl, died a bereavement which affected him deeply; he could hardly become reconciled at all at her loss. He leaves a wife and only son—Mr. Jos. Davison, of this city—who have the sympathy of the entire community in their bereavement.

His funeral took place Monday, and was largely attended by his neighbors and friends. Among those from a distance in attendance, we noticed Governor Baker and Judges Pettit, Downey and Buskirk, of the Supreme Court.—Revs. Irwin and Roberts officiated, the former paying a brief and beautiful tribute to the deceased.

Our old citizens, who have been prominently identified with the history of our county, are passing away. During the past year Antrobus, Donnell, Montague, and now, Judge Davison, have been summoned home.

## NOTE:

Judge Davison, is buried in South Park in the old section, you can not miss it, I believe it is the tallest and largest monument in South Park.

*I hope you are enjoying the articles and obits, I have several more to publish in the near future. If you have anyone special you would like for me to look up and write about, please contact me at my email address at [rwilhoit@hsonline.net](mailto:rwilhoit@hsonline.net) or please drop me a line at home, 1024 East Lakeshore Drive, Greensburg, Indiana 47240.*

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues for 2007 can be mailed in now.

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues



**Towns and Villages of Decatur County:**  
**Reprints of Articles from early Twentieth Century Papers**

Compiled and Edited by Russell Wilhoit

**Jackson Township**

**And the towns of Waynesburg and Forest Hill (as seen in Oct.1913)**

*This is article reprinted from Greensburg News, Oct, 1913 and added to and edited by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian, Jan 2007.*

*This is the Sixth in a series of articles reprinted about the small towns located in Decatur County, next issue we will take another trip back in time ,and over to Burney in Clay Twp.*

Good old Jackson township was established by the Board of County Commissioners at their March term, 1834, and is today one of the very best townships in Decatur county as regards land, farm improvements, wealth and good citizenship.

The land in old Jackson is level, rich, and all susceptible to cultivation. The soil throughout the township is what was originally called the burr oak flat –a black, wet kind of land which was not eagerly sought after by the early settlers. But in years later on a system of underdraining by tiling was introduced and the land thus developed soon, became, and is today of the very best quality.

A noticeable and very commendable feature is the fact that Jackson township farms are all square or oblong, following the subdivision of the United States survey; and still another feature. All the roads run north, south, east and west, giving the country a neat, orderly appearance, and with the new and well-built homes and barns dotting the country, its general features are of the most attractive kind.

The total taxable property of the township, as returned to the auditor for taxation way back in the year 1881, including Forest Hill corporation, was \$936,350 making an average of a little over \$507 for each individual—male and female—and as the largest part of this consisted of real estate, which was appraised at about two-thirds of its value, it is safe to say that an equal division of the property mentioned among all its population would, at that time, make each individual inhabitant of the township worth eight hundred dollars—and the township has not retrograded in valuation.

The early settlers of the township were Enoch Roster and Henry Hawke, who came from Ohio in 1820; Samuel Eli, from Union County, Indiana; Charles Guinea and Daniel Sullivan, from Jefferson County, Indiana; William H. Eddleman, (1817-1885-\*\*\*\*) John Chambers, Chesley Woodard, William and James Chambers, (1767-1842- \*8 )Daniel Eddleman, (1769-1867-\*\*\*\*) Eliza Moncrief, Jack Henry, James Wheeldon, (1799-1852-\*\*\*\*) Samuel Thompson, (1800-1862-\*) William Evans, (1790-1864-\*) Abner Hall, Adam Petree and others. The Evans and Moore families are quite numerous in the township today.

The first horse mill in the township was owned by William Evans, (died -1864\*) and located one and a half miles south of Forest Hill, at what is now know as “The Evans Corner.”

The first school in the township was taught by N. P. Bishop in the Evans neighborhood, near the old horse mill, and the first school house was built at Sardinia, on the present site of the old J. S. Harper store and was a log building.

The first church was Baptist built on a farm now owned by William Dennison, (1836-1927 \*\*) near Sardinia and the church lot deeded by Chesley Woodard.

In 1823 the nearest water mill was located at Scipio, Jennings County, and the citizens of Jackson went to mill on horseback to Scipio. The mill was owned by William Clapp, great-grandfather of our Samuel Clapp.

In 1823 the pioneers of Old Jackson were not exposed to the ravages of the Indians, although some traces remained, such as camps and fallen trees, cut down with their stone hatchets.

Game such as bear, deer and turkey was abundant, furnished the food for the early settlers of the township.

Jackson Township has three wonderful springs—and one of them is certainly a mystery of the past. This particular spring is located on the farm of Elmore Agnew, (1858-1927\*\*) one mile south of Sardinia, and is very peculiar spring of water. It is excavated to the depth of about fifteen feet, and is several feet in diameter. It seems to have been made by the Indians, or some unknown inhabitants of the past. The excavation is egg-shaped and the spring has a flow of several inches of water constantly.

Twin Springs, two and one-half miles north of Waynesburg and on the farm managed by Harry Carr, are twin

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springs, located just on the north side of his barn, and large streams of pure, sparkling water flow from their barreled walls continuously, furnishing an abundant supply of water for stock the year round. Their overflow is of sufficient quantity to create a small branch that winds its way around hill and dale and feeds a distant creek.

On the farm of Ora Maple, three-quarters of a mile due north of Waynesburg, and in a corn field with corn standing all around and about it, is an ever flowing spring; the water flows up through an eight inch circle made in some mysterious manner and at some time unknown to the oldest inhabitant. This circle, or outlet, through which the water flows is through a large piece of scoria resembling somewhat a great slab of slate or soap stone, as it lies imbedded in the bosom of mother earth to the depth of several inches. The water is tintured with iron. Apparently this spring, like that of the famous Libby prison, just burst forth out of the ground, and through this rock-like formation imbed in its little glade, and its flow is never ceasing, creating and feeding a small branch that winds its course in snake-like trail for a distance of one and a half miles where it unites and empties into a stream known as Fall Fork.

#### **The Town of Waynesburg**

On the first day of next month (Nov. 1913) Waynesburg will have reached her sixty-ninth birthday anniversary, for it was on the first day of November, 1844, that George Lough donated and platted the land for the town site; Samuel Shirk and S. G. W. Lough donated and platted an addition to the village in 1871.

Waynesburg is located eighteen miles southwest of Decatur County's county seat in the midst of a fine and very productive farming community.

About the time the last addition was platted the town was dubbed "Quail Town," and is yet occasionally called by that name, though it is only a nick-name the place received on account of the fact that some half dozen big, lubberly, lazy and almost worthless fellows did nothing but hunt, shoot and sell quail.

The first "business" man in the town was Joseph Rothschilds, who came from Germany and settled on the town site in 1844—the same year the town was platted. He built the first house in the town, a log hut, moved into it and with his pack-mule loaded to the limit with packages of sugar and coffee, and a few yards of calico and muslin. He traversed the scant paths through the woods to the homes of settlers and disposed of his goods for either cash or fur. But, as mighty oaks from little acorns grow, so did Rothschild's business grow, and soon he became the proprietor of Waynesburg's first, and for quite a while, only general store and not only did a flourishing and money-making business but saved quite a handsome sum in cash. He also erected a neat frame business house in the town and for several years was Waynesburg's foremost citizen. He was the first postmaster of the village, an office being established in 1852.

In 1850 Alexander Kelly (1808 - 1857 \*\*\*) owned and conducted a general store.

Just half a century ago Paul Sauers made, sold and repaired shoes in Waynesburg.

Samuel DeArmond (1850-1910-\*\*\*\*\*) ran a drug store with "saloon attachment" in 1870.

A general store was conducted by Joseph Hunter in 1871. He sold out, went to Cripple Creek, Colorado, during the gold boom, invested in mining stocks and today is one among Colorado's wealthiest citizens.

#### **Waynesburg Today**

The town has one small general store operated by Henry Purvis, who disposes of a large amount of good each year.

John Cornelius conducts a general blacksmithing business and enjoys a well merited trade.

One of the greatest hustlers of the town is Thomas Burch, who not only keeps a huckster wagon continually on the road, buying country produce selling groceries and supplies, but keeps a general stock of goods at his headquarters in the little town.

A small grocery store is owned and operated by George Heimlick.

Will Barton and Frank VanSyock are doing an excellent business in the saw mill line.

#### **Church**

The town has one church—the Christian—a frame building erected about twelve years ago, as it was shortly before that that their church building was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

The congregation is small and without a pastor, the preacher in charge having resigned last week. Sunday school is held every Sunday.

#### **Splendid School**

One enterprise of which the people of Waynesburg and vicinity can feel justly proud is their school building and corps of instructors. The building is a two-room brick with hallway running clear through from east to west with vestibule entrance.

Prof. Orville F. Moore is the principal and has charge of the sixth and eighth grades and first year high school. He also teaches agriculture to the pupils of eighth grade. In his departments he has an enrollment of eighteen pupils.

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(Continued from page 6)

Prof. Moore is a graduate of Central Norman College, Danville, Illinois, and is well qualified to fill the position to which he has been assigned.

Miss Jessie Mitchell is the able and efficient assistant, and has charge of grades one, two, three, four and five, and has an enrollment of thirty scholars, making total enrollment of scholars in school forty-eight. She teaches domestic science to scholars in the eighth grade.

Miss Mitchell received her training at Central Normal College and fortunate are the patrons and pupils of the Waynesburg school in having her most excellent services, for without doubt she is the right person in the right place when at the head of the primary department in a school room.

Under the wise and efficient management of Prof. Moore and Miss Mitchell the success of the present school term is assured and patrons of the school are delighted beyond measure with the work of the instructors. The school has a splendid library of three hundred volumes.

#### Oldest Pioneer Resident

The oldest living pioneer resident of Waynesburg is Mrs. Elizabeth Webb, ( 1842-1927 \*\*\*\*) who was born in a typical log cabin erected one-half mile southwest of the town on the twentieth day of January, 1842, practically being a resident of the town for seventy-two years—all her life.

The rude old log hut in which Mrs. Webb was born was built by her father in 1840, and in the heart of a dense woods inhabited by wild and ferocious animals, and it was in this cabin home Mrs. Webb (little Miss Scott) spent her girlhood days.

The home was sparsely furnished, the cooking utensils consisting of an oven in which they bake their corn pone, a skillet in which to fry their venison and other wild meats, an old copper coffee boiler—all the cooking and baking being done by raking a pile of fire coals upon an old stone hearth immediately in front of and forming a section of the old time fire place, such a thing as a cook stove being unknown and unheard of in those days. The country was full of deer, wild hogs, wild turkey and savage wolves during her early spent days in that cabin home.

She married Joseph D. Webb (1838-1903 \*\*\*\*) in 1863, and to this union was born but one son who now resides in Brooklyn, New York, and Mrs. Webb lives all alone in Waynesburg, in a home she owns and has occupied for nearly a half century, the NEWS being her only companion, and one she says she couldn't keep house without. Her husband died at the family home in Waynesburg in 1903.

Her father was Parker Scott (died in 1858 \*\*\*\*) who emigrated to Indiana in 1840 and entered 160 acres of land within half mile of the town site.

#### Prominent Farmers

Among the prominent and influential farmers residing in the vicinity of Waynesburg are: Venner & Smith, Martin Hill, Ed Thurston, William Fear, Wilbur Thurston, Earl Shera, John Cooper, George Ketchum, David Fulton, (1848-1928- \*\*\*\*\*) John M. Munns, (1859-19~ \*\*\*\*) Ovid Houze, Steaben Pleak, Dr. H. N. Oldham, William Anderson, J. A. Thurston, W. T. Rhorer, Harry Carr, Ora Maple and Melvin Carter.

Leaving Waynesburg and vicinity, where the News representative met with a royal welcome at every home in which he entered, we journeyed northeast to the thriving little village of Forest Hill. (This article will be continued in the next issue of *The Bulletin* coming in May)

#### NOTES:

\*- buried in Lower Union Cemetery

\*\*-buried in Wesley Cemetery

\*\*\*- buried in Asbury Cemetery

\*\*\*\*- buried in Shirk's Cemetery

\*\*\*\*\*-Eddleman Cemetery

\*\*\*\*\*- Old Westport Cemetery

\*\*\*\*\*-New Westport Cemetery

\*8- is Milford Cemetery

\*9-is Patrick Cemetery

\*10- is South Park Cemetery

*The rest of the people mentioned, (the early settlers) either lie in a unmarked grave in Decatur County or died elsewhere, no records were found here.*



I am starting a new series from my personal collection. As you can see, on the left is a view of North Broadway looking south from the 1940's. The card on the right is the "business" section of Adams looking south at around 1900.

*-Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian*

#### Some Exhibits and Events for 2007

##### January-March, 2007

Textile Exhibit Room - Winter Clothing

Gallery - Basketball History and Milroy Then and Now (A student project for the Indiana State Competition)

Annual Meeting, 6:00 p.m. February 24<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church

Program: Jerrold Wilson on the Lewis & Clark Expedition.

##### April-June, 2007

Labors of Love - A collection of hand made objects from various people in the community. (May-August) (Exhibit created by Ginny Garvey and Helen Hamilton) Anyone who has any objects they think would be useful in the exhibit, please call Ginny Garvey (663-2132)

In The Pink - Textile Exhibit Room - Clothing, quilts, and other textile objects of the pink persuasion. (Exhibit created by Nita McCoy and Susan Ricke).

##### Gallery

Veteran Memorabilia

Racing Memorabilia

World War II Exhibit (A Student Project for the State Competition)

April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 - A Tour of the County with Jane Brown.

April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 - 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Musical April 29. South Decatur High School Concert Choir, Matt Diehl, director

May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007 - Memorial Day - A Tour of South Park with Russell Wilhoit.

Fifth Sunday Musicals, 2007

by Reed Schuster

A vocal fanfare and the triumphant march into the third season of the Fifth Sunday Musicals presented by the Historical Society of Decatur County! **Save the dates:**

**Sunday, April 29, Sunday, July 29, and Sunday, September 30, 2007. All presentations at the First Presbyterian Church, 202 North Franklin, Greensburg at 2:30 p.m.**

**April 29. South Decatur High School Concert Choir, Matt Diehl, director.** This group of very talented young voices appeared at Disney Land, and has been a winner of the Silver Medal in the Indiana State Music competition and of Gold Awards for their solo work.

**July 29. The Mossberg Strings,** a family of nine children, five violinists, ages: 17, Caleb, 16, Aaron, 15, Rachael, 13, Jacob, 12, and Jared, 11. They have been featured in the REMC Consumer and are recipients of many local and state awards.

**September 30. Greensburg Junior High School Musical Ensemble directed by Nick Parcell.** He will lead his students, forty in number, into the sound of the classics for the young. Enjoy their music! In fact this will be their 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation ... Welcome back G.J.H.S.M.E.

It is hard to believe that this season of the Fifth Sunday Musicals is the third biennial. It all started in 2003 with the first concert featuring Pat Hicks, harpist and Jane Link, flute. There were sixty five guests. The next musical was on the front porch of the Museum ... It was a hot humid day...eighty six people brought their own chairs and found shade under the handsome birch tree, but the humidity was too much for the strings of the harpsichord and the violin. Kathryn Wilson, violinist, broke a string. Her father – to the rescue—drove home and returned with a new string by the time of the finale. But Mrs. Hicks with harpsichord strings going limp went on with the music – all this to the tune of the “Carnival of the Animals”, narrated by Mayor Bailey. The air conditioned museum was a refuge indeed. The first season is not over yet ... It was late August and the Day Light Savings time made a difference in evening sunsets and then there was the rain. It was the first appearance of the G.J.H.S.M.E. It was supposed to be on the museum porch ... We lost the daylight and then the rain ... Some nice soul said “ask the Church” and we have been there ever since. The other Fifth Sundays Musicals have had their moments to remember. We have all learned a lot, and the board and membership of the H.S.D.C. have made it all possible. Oh yes ~ The Sponsors too ~~~.

We are looking forward to seeing you April 29<sup>th</sup>, for the opening concert of the third biennial Fifth Sunday Musical. ... And remember Kathryn Wilson... She learned a lot being included in the Fifth Sundays musicals, mostly, never leave home without an extra G string...for her violin.

Admission is free to the community. However, there will be an appreciation collection. Afterwards meet the artists and enjoy Jane Brown’s Fifth Sunday punch and home made treats. The money received for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday musicals will be used to build the grand piano restoration fund. Don’t forget the other Fifth Sunday Musicals: July 29<sup>th</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Tree and Shrub consists of members who have made a donation to dedicate a tree or shrub in our landscaping. The Board would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank those donors. This is a list of recent dedications.

Diana Swegman	In Memory of	Ralph Swegman
Shine, Robbins, and Heikkinen Families	In Memory of	Hunter and Judith Robbins
Richard Donnell	In Memory of	Myron and Bessie (Springmier) Donnell
John Thomson	In Memory of	Frank M. Thomson, Mayor 1904-1910

Editor of the Bulletin

George Granholt  
E-mail articles and ideas to  
Email: [gholt@core.com](mailto:gholt@core.com)

Decatur County Historian & Genealogist

Russell Wilhoit  
1024 East Lakeshore Drive  
Greensburg, IN 47240  
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Tri-County Genealogists

Irene Krieger  
23184 Pocket Road  
Batesville, IN 47006

**"The Bulletin"**



Society's Officers

President: David Miers  
Vice-President: Tom Barker  
Treasurer: Debbie Greiwe  
Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier  
Recording Secretary: Linda Volk  
Membership Secretary: Rheadawn Metz

Board of Directors

Kathryn Bailey	Ginny Garvey
Mike McCoy	Charity Mitchell
Ed Deiwert	

Society's Agent

William H. Robbins

Museum Director

Diana Springmier

Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00 until April 1st  
After April 1st we will also be open on  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - for group tours call  
Museum phone: 663-2764  
Email: [dechissoc@core.com](mailto:dechissoc@core.com)

PERMIT #80  
IN  
GREENSBURG,  
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Historical Society of Decatur County  
P.O. Box 163  
Greensburg, IN 47240





# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 12 No.2

Summer 2007

Greensburg, Indiana

Epigraph - Museums  
relate the past, live  
the present, and an-  
ticipate the future.

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### Ira G. Grover (1832-1876)

*Reprinted from the Greensburg Standard, May 31, 1876 issue,*

*Edited by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Histori-  
an, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007*

***This is 7<sup>th</sup> is a series of Obits about some of the  
early settlers and later well known men and wom-  
en who lived and died here and are buried here in  
Decatur county. They are the ones that helped  
shape Decatur County into what we have today***

Died at the residence of his sister, Mrs. M. Ste-  
vens, in this city, Tuesday morning the 30<sup>th</sup>, May  
1876 in the 44<sup>th</sup> year of his age. The funeral will take  
place from Mrs. Steven's residence this evening at 5 o'clock, with Masonic  
honors.

Col. Grover was born in Union county, Ind. His parents removed to this  
county in 1836. In 1858, after working his own way through college, he grad-  
uated at Asbury University. In 1860 he was elected a representative in the  
legislature. He responded to the first call for troops and entered the service  
as a 1<sup>st</sup>, Lieut. in the 7<sup>th</sup> Reg. Ind. Vol. for three months. At the expiration of  
his term of service he recruited a company for the 7<sup>th</sup>, and with it enlisted for  
three years; he being mustered in as Captain, from which rank he was regu-  
larly promoted to Col. He was with his regiment in active service from the  
date of its muster in in 1861, until he was take prisoner in 1864. He participat-  
ed in all the terrible battles on the Potomac and was made a prisoner during  
the battles of the Wilderness. He was a prisoner at Saulsbury and Charles-  
ton; at the latter place he, with others was placed under fire of the Federal  
batteries. On being exchanged, he spent a few days with his friends and then  
joined his regiment near Richmond. The Col. was three times wounded; at  
Port Republic, second Bull Run and when captured. A wound in his head is  
thought to have been the original cause of his death. He was brevetted Briga-  
dier General for gallant and meritorious service. In 1866 he was nominated  
for Congress and made a gallant though unsuccessful race against the Hon.  
W. S. Holman. In 1867 he was elected Clerk of this county and was re-  
elected in '71. Soon after this he began to show symptoms of a disordered  
intellect and in '73 was sent to the asylum, where he remained some time  
without receiving benefit. He returned home where he received all the care  
that friendship could bestow, until death took him. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of Oct. '75 he  
was taken much worse and since that date had not spoken or fully recognized  
any one. His disease was softening of the brain. He was a member of the  
Christian church, and leaves a wife but no children.

**Note-** Ira Grover is buried in the old section of South Park; he has one of the  
taller monuments in the cemetery. This man was destined to many great  
things, and the Civil War ended what would have been certainly a longer life  
then his 44 years, as it did for many young men. But we will never know what  
he would have accomplished had he not had the head wound from the war.

**"Soldier rest, thy warfare's o'er**

**Sleep the sleep that knows no waking."**



## President's Letter

At last the Museum is finished. Much has happened these past three years. As a result of the Building Committee's efforts, under the professional guidance of David Miers, the Historical Society has a world-class facility keeping Decatur County's heritage alive and, most importantly, accessible. Add to that the volunteers who keep the museum operating and functioning. They are to be commended for their constant and enthusiastic participation at the museum and within the Historical Society.

I would like to welcome six new members to the Board of Directors of the Society. They are Polly Matlock, Bryan Robbins, James Rosenberry, Lynda Smith, Dennis Wilson, and Roy Connor. I look forward to working with them these next two years. Plus, I look forward to working with the Museum Director, Diana Springmier, and the County Historian, Russell Wilhoit.

With construction finally over, we can turn our attention to the many activities the Society has planned for the coming year. Reed Schuster has organized three more Fifth Sunday Musicals for 2007. Ginny Garvey is planning a new calendar for 2008. The Society will be offering a new Christmas ornament for 2007, as well as a non-specific-year ornament depicting the courthouse tower and tree. I am planning completion of another 8mm film taken in Greensburg in 1941 by Charles Platt showing the various members of the Kiwanis Club in 1941. All these items will be available for purchase in the Museum Gift Shop in early autumn, as will other merchandise pertaining to Greensburg and Decatur County.

I will be appointing a Membership Committee in May to develop a plan to expand the membership of the Society. The Museum and Society have much to offer and membership does have its rewards. One of those rewards is the quarterly Bulletin, which we plan to build on and improve in the months ahead. If you know someone you think should be a member, tell them about the Historical Society of Decatur County and suggest that they join. They will be glad you did.

Tom Barker

Here at the office, I am in the process of mailing out membership cards. Enclosed with your card you will find a membership form. Please ask your friends and relatives if they would like to join the Historical Society of Decatur County. Memberships also make good gifts. If you haven't received your membership card yet, it will be coming soon. We are also looking for volunteers. There are many varieties of work, from small jobs to large projects. If you are interested in preserving the history of our community, call me and tell me what you are interested in.

Susan Ricke

Museum office: 663-2764

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues

## Museum Musings

*By Diana Springmier*

Spring arrived early and fleetingly but appears to have returned. The bulbs, planted by local garden clubs and the azaleas have bloomed. The grass welcomed an early April mowing by board member Linda Volk.

The past few years Stan Saler or his dad, Jim, our First Federal neighbor, has mowed the society's museum yard. As Stan prepares for high school graduation and a summer trip to Europe and then on to Purdue, the high school job has passed on to Tyler Wickens, grandson and nephew of our other Franklin Street neighbor, Wickens and Wickens LLCI.

"In the Pink," a delightful spring textile exhibit from the museum's textile collection, ranging from the early 1900's to the present fills the Textile Display Room- all in the pink. On loan from Jessie Bailey is a soft pink graduation party dress of her father's cousin and a lovely pink coverlet.

On a cold, rainy mid-April Saturday afternoon, forty-five guests, family and friends of the late Joleen Connor, former society member and gifted quilter and embroiderer, gathered in the gallery. The dedication of one of Joleen's quilts, given to the museum by her family, was held among a display of the museum's quilt collection. The program was planned by Debbie Greiwe, member of the Tuesday Night Stitchery Club, Charity Mitchell, museum archivist, and Jane Keith, Joleen's close friend and quilter.

For the fourth grade students' museum field trips in May, the gallery will offer a basketball sports display from the 1930's -1960's. Rick Acra's GHS 1965 senior cords and Rita (Luken) Burkert's 1953-55 cheerleading sweater and megaphone as well as Harriet (Kirschner) Fisher's Clarksburg Knights red corduroy cheerleading dress, are on display. Many pictures of local basketball standouts, including the Westhafer boys, are on view.

"Labors of Love," the summer exhibit, is being planned by Ginny Garvey and Helen Hamilton. If you wish to share any of your family's history created by a loved one, Call Ginny (812)663-2132 or Helen (812)663-8323. This exhibit will also be on display during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July open house.

Two local clubs have had meetings at the museum recently in the conference room. Lone Tree DAR will celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a reception at the museum on Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. for their members, guests and the community.

The museum's Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. hours have had a positive response from staff, visitors and researchers. Sunday hours remain 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Don't hesitate to drop in if you are uptown and have some extra time or have friends visiting. We are becoming a destination.

### Tea Time



**The museum will be hosting a summer tea/luncheon  
on Saturday, June 16th at 1:00 p.m.**

**A presentation on hats will be featured.**

**Get your tickets soon, limited seating!**

**Helen Hamilton (663-8323), Nancy Cuskaden (663-7896),**

**or Diana Springmier (663-2997)**

**Hat and gloves optional!**



## Decatur County's First Two Court Houses

By

Calvin D. Davis

Professor Emeritus of History

Duke University

Citizens of Decatur County rightly regard their court house with special pride. Built 150 years ago as Indiana was emerging from the pioneer period, it is an outstanding example of the romantic architecture of that time. The clock tower from which grows one of the most famous trees in the world is a symbol of the county and the city of Greensburg. Not many Decatur Countians recall that the building is the county's third court house. There are no known pictures of the earlier court houses, but there are several descriptions of them. Lewis A. Harding described them in his 1915 History of Decatur County Indiana and included some of the more important documents pertaining to them. Decatur County's great journalist-historian, Orville Thomson, mentioned the buildings briefly in the 1882 Atlas of Decatur County but he had more to say in one of his essays, "Good Old Pioneer Days – 1820 to 1852" in E. R. Merritt's Illustrated Souvenir of Greensburg, Indiana, published in 1894. The Greensburg Standard of April 13, 1903, contains one of the finest articles about the court houses ever published. If Orville Thomson did not write it, he probably contributed information for it. The sesquicentennial edition of the Greensburg Daily News of August 18, 1966, contains another outstanding article.

The state legislature in 1821 provided for organization of Decatur County. This was done in May, 1822, and on June 14 of that year the county commissioners chose the site of the county seat. Thomas Hendricks of Pennsylvania, who had surveyed the area for the federal government in 1819-1820 and had acquired considerable land holdings in the area, owned the site. During the winter of 1820-1821 he had brought his wife, son, and five daughters down the Ohio River from Pennsylvania to Madison. Soon they made their way to the Hendricks claim where Hendricks built a double-log cabin of one story. As the county was established, officials met in Hendricks' cabin and a court was organized. A commission on July 14, 1822, chose the area as the county seat, and on August 26, 1822, John B. Potter laid out the town; it received the name of Greensburg. Tradition says that Mrs. Hendricks had asked that the town be named in honor of her home town in Pennsylvania.

The Hendricks cabin stood two hundred feet east of East Street on the north side of what is now Central Avenue. Transacting county business in a small cabin in which seven people lived must have been difficult, but county officials made no immediate plans for a permanent court house. A jail was more urgently needed! The commissioners on February 18, 1823, ordered construction of a 16 x 18 foot one-story double-log cabin to serve as a jail on the southwest corner of the square reserved for a court house. They ordered that the spaces between logs be "filled with brick and mortar to make it perfectly safe."

The commissioners on January 15, 1825, decided upon plans for a court house in the center of the square. The 1903 Standard described the plan:

It was to be built of brick, 40 feet square, the first story to be fifteen feet in the clear and the second story to be thirteen feet. This building was erected by Jacob Stewart in 1825 and was probably not occupied before 1826.

The first floor contained the court room and was the full size of the building except the stairway taken off the east end. The judge's bench was at the west side of the room which was about 40 x 20. Four small rooms upstairs served for county offices, jury rooms, etc. There is no record of the cost of this building, but its cost was not to exceed \$2,000 as everything was cheap in those days

The Harding history includes the report of the county commissioners – or justices as they were called – of January 15, 1825, which described the projected building in great detail. Of special interest is the requirement that a cupola twelve feet wide be built on top of the building. The author of the 1966 News article described more details – but placed the court room on the second floor! The News told that a high board fence surrounded the building. People with business at the court house could not walk through gates. They had to climb stiles. Hogs and cattle freely roamed the streets of Greensburg, and no one wanted them to walk into the court house.

Small though the court house was, it served functions besides county government. Presbyterians and Methodists were the first denominations to organize congregations in Greensburg. For several years, in Thomson's

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words, they "held their Sunday services 'turn-about' in the court house." The Presbyterians made more use of the building. In the Manuscripts Division of the Indiana State Library there are copies of three letters written by the Reverend J. R. Wheelock, a Presbyterian home missionary, in Greensburg in 1831, 1832, and 1833. He used the court house for a Sunday school and special lectures as well as church services and his wife taught a school for girls. While pleased to have the use of the building, Wheelock on May 20, 1831, wrote that it was "cold, dirty, and uncomfortable." He was not hopeful that the churches would soon be able to build their own buildings. "The people here," he said, "were quite poor and just able to support their families."

Poor, though Decatur Countians in the early 1830's may have been, they did not come to the flat, wet, and forested plains of central Indiana with the expectation of remaining poor. They cut down trees, ploughed the land and planted corn and wheat, and they raised hogs, cattle, and sheep. There were markets for meat, flour, and corn meal in the lower South and the Caribbean. Mills were built for grinding grain; wagons hauled these products to river ports. Farmers drove hogs and cattle to Cincinnati, Madison, and other river ports. Gradually Decatur Countians accumulated money. They built roads, bridges, churches, and schools. Many people replaced log cabins with frame or brick houses. The county tore down its log jail on the square, built another at some distance, tore that building down, and then built a jail of stone on the original jail site. All the while, for almost thirty years, the county made do with its 40 x 40 brick court house, but as more people moved into Decatur County, more was required of its officials. The railroad from Indianapolis to Cincinnati was built through Greensburg in 1853; in the following year a telegraph line connected Greensburg with the outside world. It was time to build a new court house. The commissioners in 1854 ordered the court house torn down and employed a brilliant architect, Edwin May, to build the court house which still stands on the square in Greensburg.

### Coming Events

#### April-June, 2007

**Labors of Love** – A collection of hand made objects from various people in the community. (May-August) (Exhibit created by Ginny Garvey and Helen Hamilton) Anyone who has any objects they think would be useful in the exhibit, please call Ginny Garvey (663-2132)

**In The Pink – Textile Exhibit Room** – Clothing, quilts, and other textile objects of the pink persuasion. (Exhibit created by Nita McCoy and Susan Ricke).

#### Gallery

**Veteran Memorabilia**

**Racing Memorabilia**

**World War II Exhibit** (A Student Project for the State Competition)

**April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007** – A Tour of the County with Jane Brown.

**April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Musical April 29.** South Decatur High School Concert Choir, Matt Diehl, director

**May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007 - Memorial Day** – A Tour of South Park with Russell Wilhoit.



**Towns and Villages of Decatur County:**  
**Reprints of Articles from early Twentieth Century Papers**  
**Compiled and Edited by Russell Wilhoit**

**Burney**

**An enterprising town of  
 beautiful homes, well kept lawns,  
 cement walks and shaded streets**

*This article reprinted from Greensburg News, Sept. 22, 1913 and added to and edited by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian, April, 2007*

*This is the Seventh in a series of articles reprinted about the small towns located in Decatur County, next issue we will take another trip back in time, and over to Smyrna.*

Burney, Ind., Sept. 22, 1913 – It is our purpose than to let the great army of News readers know that the writer speaks knowingly and intelligently when he makes the declaration that the town of Burney has no superiors and but few equals when it comes to magnificent homes, large and well kept lawns, wide smooth cement walks, together with beautifully shaded streets, and is a business center for one of the most progressive and wealthy set of farmers within the confines of Decatur county.

It is, indeed and in truth, a little city of attractive homes—homes of peace and plenty, quietude and splendor, and an inviting place for one to live.

In brief, and in the language of our most excellent friend, Morgan L. Miers (grandfather of Morgan Miers), "Burney has everything she needs to make complete a most desirable and right up-to-date home town, save electric light," and that much desired luxury will be added in the very near future, and we give the residents of Burney a "tip," "when the time comes to raise the necessary funds for electric lights we predict Mr. Miers will not only be a cheerful but a liberal contributor.

The town was named Burney in honor of Samuel Milton Burney, (1816-1901\*) one among the first settlers who came with his parents to the place eighty years since, and located on a farm within a stone's throw of the town site when he was but fifteen years of age. He was the father of our good friend John W. Burney, (1849-1945 \*) a life long resident of the town.

The first building erected upon the town site was a blacksmith shop, and John Knuckles was the builder thereof in the year 1884.

William A. Minor erected the first residence, and it was in the year 1884. The same year a good sized business room was buildt by John W. Burney, (1849-1945\*) W A. Minor and W. E. Burney, (1852-1931\*) which they owned in partnership and leased to Jacob Doll, who operated the first and only general store in the town. Mr. Doll was afterward a member of our State Legislature.

George O'Laughlin (1824-1905\*) was the next man to build a home in the town and that also was in 1884, and during that year a large elevator building was constructed by John W. and W. E. Burney.

It was also in the year 1884 that the laying of the rails of the now branch of the Big Four railway (G. H. & C.) from Greensburg to Columbus was completed, and on the Fourth of July of that year a free excursion train was run over the road from Greensburg to Columbus, taking on passengers at all way points between the two towns. No railway fare being charged, it is unnecessary to say that the excursion, as regards numbers, was a "howling" success.

**Burney's Business Men**

Albert E. Howe deals in general merchandise, and carries a line of goods that are up-to-date, clean and attractive. His prices are such that interest the buyer and his patronage most liberal. He is a hustler and deserves the large business success he has attained.

Clay Alexander (1862-1925\*) buys and ships large quantities of hay and straw; burns a livery barn that is fitted up with first class rigs, and if in this day and age of "hustle and bustle" you would not be satisfied to ride behind a spirited horse. Clay will gladly accommodate you in the very latest fashion of travel via the automobile, for he has one, and a good one, too. He is doing a successful business.

A large elevator is managed by Sidener & Price, who give the farmers a ready and first class market for their



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grain products. They buy and ship thousands of bushels of all kinds of grain, always paying the top of the market price. They also handle hard and soft coal, and are doing a thriving business in all departments.

No necessity for going hungry when in Burney – just call at the Hotel Alexander and you will be served with as tempting and satisfying food as you could wish for. Mrs. Mollie Alexander (1870-1928\*) looks after the culinary department and that's a guarantee of satisfaction to the hungry.

One of the hustlers of the little town is John C. Hays, (1874-1938\*) who runs a general store, carries a stock of goods that make satisfied customers, gives personal attention to every branch of the business, and of course is enjoying a lucrative and satisfactory business.

Frank W. Kean is the tonsorial artist of the town, and in connection with his barber shop conducts a restaurant where you can get a first class lunch, cool and refreshing soft drinks and ice cream.

A splendid meat market is owned by Wallace Lane, who is always delighted to furnish all callers with choice meats of all kind.

G. M. Minor does a general blacksmithing business, and handles pumps of all kinds in connection with his other business.

The butcher shop of Samuel A. Link is again open to the public after his siege of illness and confinement, and his many friends and patrons will be glad to learn that he again able to be at his place of business and to serve them with appetizing meats of all kinds.

A blacksmith and repair shop is owned and conducted by John Wasson, and his numerous friends and patrons will readily attest as to his splendid workmanship and ability to do anything in the blacksmithing line.

Doctors E. A. Porter and C. G. Harrod are the practitioners of the town and vicinity, and are both well-read, up-to-date physicians, who enjoy not only the confidence of the people but a splendid practice.

The telephone exchange is in charge of Mrs. Mollie Alexander, who is both attentive to business and accommodating to the public.

McCullough Hardware Company managed by. F. McCullough, one of the greatest hustlers, best and most, active business men in Decatur county, is an institution that the people of Burney and surrounding country most heartily appreciate and liberally patronize. The firm carries an extensive and varied stock of hardware, stoves, tinware, farming implements and general farm supplies of every description, including wire fencing, fence post, drain tile, Portland cement, paints, oils, varnishes, harness, fishing outfits, guns, ammunition, gasoline engines, power washing machines and wringers, and a thousand and one other things that go to complete an up-to-date establishment like that of the McCullough Hardware Company.

The News, like the people of Burney, takes a pardonable pride in Mr. McCullough, because of the fact that he sows what he reaps—spends his money at home and in building up the town in which he resides, as evidenced by his recently built modern and splendid home of two stories. The house stands as an ornament to Burney, and as a monument to Mr. McCullough's devotion to the town and its up building.

His residence has a large porch encircling the front, with five rooms on the first floor; on the second floor are three bed rooms, bath and large sleeping porch; there is a basement under the entire house, and the water supply is furnished by pressure tanks concealed within the basement walls. It is wired for electricity, and cost Mr. McCullough five thousand dollars. The home is a model one, convenient and beautiful. Long live Mr. McCullough and his family to enjoy their new home and its attendant blessings.

### The Churches

Burney has two churches—one Methodist and one Baptist denomination. Rev. Charles Pinnick is pastor of the Methodist congregation, and preaches every Sunday, while, Rev. Mr. Jones has charge of the Baptist flock and conducts services every other Sunday. The Burney folks are a church going people.

### Knights of Pythias

A good, strong, working lodge of Knight of the Pythias has a home here, and meet regularly each week. The membership is large and active.

The Pythian Sisters also have a good membership and hold some splendid meetings.

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### The Burney State Bank

The organization of the Burney Sate Bank has been fully effected, officers, cashier and directors elected, and a committee appointed to purchase all necessary furniture, fixtures and equipment for the bank building, which will soon be erected on a lot recently purchased for the building on Main street, opposite the telephone exchange. The building will be a modern, one story brick, twenty-two by forty feet.

The officers are: Will G. Smiley, president; J. W. Corya, vice-president, with Hubert Moore, cashier.

Its directors are composed of the following named gentlemen: Will G. Smiley, J. W. Corya, C. S. Wright, Dr. George Crawford, Frank Alexander,(1870-1919\*) John G. Gartin,(1885-1916\*) and W. F. McCullough. Its capital stock is twenty-five thousand dollars.

### Public Schools

If there is any one thing the people of Burney and vicinity take especial pride in it is their most excellent schools and the able and efficient corps of teachers presiding over them.

Prof. F. C. Landrus is principal, Miss Violet Paris assistant high school teacher, and in the high school department there are thirty-two pupils.

Mrs. Edna Seal conducts the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, and teaches domestic science. In these grades, there are twenty-five scholars.

Miss Louise Wright has supervision over the third, fourth and fifth grades, and has an enrollment of fifty-four pupils.

The primary department, including first and second grades, is under the watchful care of Miss Fanny Johnson, and has scholars to the number of thirty-one.

Miss Alice Arnold is the efficient instructor in music and drawing, and the total enrollment of the schools is one hundred forty-two.

The school building is an attractive two-story brick, contains five rooms, including a large and finely finished basement containing play grounds for the children. It was recently erected at a cost of twelve thousand dollars.

### Enormous Shipping Business

During the past year—from September 15, 1912, to September 15, 1913—the books of the railroad freight office at Burney show a total shipment of one hundred and thirty-eight full loaded cars out of the town to distant and different points, and had it not have been for the recent floods, which tied up the shipping business for six weeks, the showing would be decidedly greater, but it is splendid as it is, and show Burney to be one of the important and big shipping points of the county.

### Auctioneer

Burney is the home of Col. Earl Gartin, one of the coming auctioneers of Indiana. He is building a new and modern residence right here in Burney and on the main thoroughfare of the town and with favorable weather he and his will soon be cozily and comfortably domiciled therein.

### Noted Farmers and Stock Dealers

Go in any direction you choose from Burney, and you will find as good, rich, productive soil as ever the sun shone upon, and as thrifty well-to-do, enterprising farmers as can be found any where, together with magnificent and well kept farm homes, large barns and all other up-to-date improvement. Nor is this all, in Burney and surrounding neighborhoods, you will find breeders, shippers and dealers in fine stock of all kinds, among the more prominent we mention Francis Pumphrey,(1865-1924\*\*) large buyer and shipper of all kinds of stock, the Davis Brothers, extensive dealers in all kinds of stock, Ira Carman,(1859-1946\*) quite an extensive dealer in extra fine mules, J. W. Corya, a

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

dealer in and feeder of sheep and hogs in large numbers, and last but by no means least, are Harry E. Pavy, Will G. Smiley, John G. Gartin, Morgan L. Miers and Marion Tomson, extensive feeders of fancy beef cattle.

*Notes- death dates with one \*,--- buried in Milford Cemetery, Milford*

*death dates with two \*\*--- buried in Navoo Cemetery /Alley Cemetery, Clay township*

### Vintage Postcards



The postcard on the left above is Burney in 1912. The postcard on the right is a 1908 view of Franklin Street looking south. This is a second in a series of photos from my postcard collection of Greensburg and Decatur County. Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian.

### Fifth Sunday Musicals

**July 29. The Mossberg Strings**, a family of nine children, five violinists, ages: 17, Caleb, 16, Aaron, 15, Rachael, 13, Jacob, 12, and Jared, 11. They have been featured in the REMC Consumer and are recipients of many local and state awards.

**September 30. Greensburg Junior High School Musical Ensemble directed by Nick Parcell.** He will lead his students, forty in number, into the sound of the classics for the young. Enjoy their music! In fact this will be their 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation ... Welcome back G.J.H.S.M.E.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend. All are welcome. Admission is free.

Editor of the Bulletin

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**"The Bulletin"**



Society's Officers

President: Tom Barker  
Vice-President: Linda Volk  
Treasurer: Debbie Greiwe  
Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier  
Recording Secretary: Charity Mitchell

Board of Directors

Roy Connor	Ginny Garvey
Mike McCoy	Polly Matlock
Bryan Robbins	Lynda Smith
Jim Rosenberry	Dennis Wilson

Society's Agent

William H. Robbins

Museum Director

Diana Springmier

Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 -April thru December

Museum office: 663-2764

Email: [dechissoc@core.com](mailto:dechissoc@core.com)

After hours, call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Society est. 1957  
Museum est. 1984



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PERMIT #80

Historical Society of Decatur County  
P.O. Box 163  
Greensburg, IN 47240



# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 12 No.3

Fall 2007

Greensburg, Indiana

Bright youth passes  
swiftly as a thought.  
Theognis  
c. 545 B.C.

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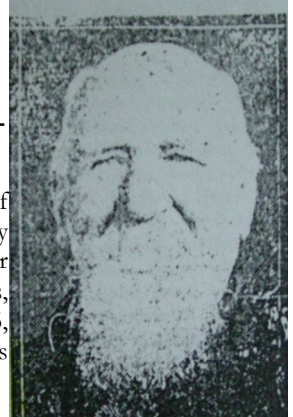
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### City Mourns Loss of Last Survivor of Davis Captors

**Nathan Henry Miller 1842-1928**

#### Funeral Monday will close important chapter in U. S. History

The passing of an historic figure was mourned by citizens of Greensburg today in the death at his home here late yesterday afternoon of Nathan Henry Miller, 86 years old, the last survivor of the band of Union army scouts that captured Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States, near Ocilla, Ga., on May 5, 1865. Mr. Miller passed away at his home with his daughter, Miss Ida Miller, 202 McKee street, at 4:30 o'clock.



Until he had suffered a severe attack of stomach trouble early in February, he had enjoyed robust health. A familiar figure on the streets of this city, he never tired of telling the story of the dramatic episode at the close of the Civil war in which he had participated. His birthday anniversary, until this year, had always been the occasion of a gala day in his life,

"Uncle Henry," as Mr. Miller was familiarly known here, was born in Pennsylvania on March 16, 1812. He had lived in Greensburg since 1875. During the Civil war he served two enlistments, first in 1862 with the 67<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania infantry and during the remainder of the war with the 7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania cavalry.

#### The Historic Incident

As a corporal of the 7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania cavalry, Miller was one of a band of 50 scouts who volunteered for special duty on May 2, 1865, in a call to intercept the president of the Confederacy, who at that time was reported to be attempting to escape to the sea coast and thence to Europe.

After a three days' search the Union force, shortly after daybreak on May 5, sighted a camp and effected the surrender of 25 Confederate soldiers without any opposition. At that time Mr. Davis, attired in the guise of an old lady, came out of a tent and asked permission to go to a neighboring house just outside the lines for a bucket of water. After the request had been granted by the captain in charge the "lady" was stopped by an inquisitive corporal, John Malone, who began asking questions. While talking, he observed military boots under the skirts and called the captain "announced is Jeff Davis."

#### Breakfasted by Captives

After a breakfast in which the troops divided their hardtack and coffee with Mr. and Mrs. Davis and a sister of Mrs. Davis, the captives were placed in a wagon and taken to Macon, Ga.

This is the story of the historic event as often related by Mr. Miller. The local veteran had been officially advised by the war department that he was the last survivor of the band of captors of Jefferson Davis.

Mr. Miller was an adherent to the German Lutheran faith and was affiliated with "Pap" Thomas post No. 5, G.A.R. of this city.

Surviving Mr. Miller are five children: a son, James H Miller, of this city; and four daughters, Miss Ida Miller, and Mrs. Charles Klausning, of this city, Mrs. Lou Myers, Indianapolis;

(Continued on page 3)



## President's Letter

Here it is mid-Summer already. A lot is going on these days at the Museum and within the Society. The Board of Directors has instituted some changes which will make membership in the Society more rewarding than ever. New items are being acquired for purchase in the Gift Shop. And we are already planning for Greensburg's 150th birthday celebration in 2009.

Membership is number one on my agenda as president of the Society. I have appointed a committee to develop ways to add to our membership. Bryan Robbins and Greg Rust have agreed to help on this committee. Another committee consisting of Debbie Greiwe, Linda Volk, and Jim Rosenberry will work with Matt Westhafer in developing a "Financial Mission Statement" regarding the Society's investment portfolio.

The Museum Gift Shop and ways to improve it is the charge of the Gift Shop Committee, consisting of Linda Volk, Polly Matlock, and Tom Barker. New items which will be available this Fall include two new Christmas ornaments. One will have the post office on it and the year 2007. The other will be a non-year-specific ornament featuring an illustration of the court house tower & tree. Plus, a new calendar for 2008 will be available featuring photos of "The Steeples of Decatur County".

A new tool being used by the Museum is a laptop computer loaded with software specific to the needs of a museum. This acquisition was made possible through a grant from the Department of Tourism. That same grant also is underwriting the cost of a new brochure which will promote the Society and the Museum to new members. The brochure will be available in August.

Another change that has been long overdue is the date of the Annual Meeting. The Board has listened to the Society members requesting that the Annual Meeting be held later in the Spring so as to avoid the harsh weather typical of February. I am happy to announce that the Annual Dinner & Program will be held in April starting in 2008. This will consist of a dinner and program only. The business part of the Annual Meeting will take place at the regular February Board Meeting held the first Thursday in February at the Museum. This Board Meeting will be open to Society members and will be held in the Gallery. Specific times and dates will be announced later.

Looking down the road, Bryan Robbins advised the Board Members of the creation of a Steering Committee to start planning the community's celebration of Greensburg's 150th Birthday in 2009. The Board agreed to help in the planning of this event. All Society members are encouraged to let the Board know their thoughts on how best to observe Greensburg's Sesquicentennial.

If you have not visited the Museum lately, I suggest you do so. Lots to do and see. I hope to see you there.

Tom Barker

President

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues



## *Museum Musings* by Diana Springmier

The museum welcomed many visitors and volunteers of all ages and walks of life this spring and summer. Children from the YMCA Day Camp toured regularly. The Carousel Play and Learn Center pre-schoolers planted the flowers in the front yard gardens. Nine seminarians from Guadalajara, Mexico accompanied by Father Mike O'Mara, a Greensburg native, surprised the staff one Thursday morning. The Greensburg High School classes of 1945 and 1967 as well as the Clinton Homemakers Club, the Kingston Presbyterian men's group, and the local herb club had scheduled tours.

A June event, a luncheon tea and style show, chaired by Nancy Cuskaden and Helen Hamilton for guests seated at flower and china laden tables in the first floor rooms, was a delightful afternoon for thirty-four ladies in attendance. Candy Acra and her friends entertained with a '50's style show during lunch. The museum fundraiser, the second tea of the year, was again well-received, and many have inquired when the next affair will take place. Stay tuned.

The Shannon-Lathrop home museum and gallery in the new addition have been overflowing with exhibits as well as the upstairs Textile Display Room's "In the Pink" exhibit from the 1880's to the 1980's. The first floor "Labors of Love" displays of needlework, hand-painted china, wood carvings and clothing were all lovingly created by the donors or family members who have loaned them to the museum with their accompanying family stories.

A special display on exhibit through July 4<sup>th</sup> has been Mike Stokes' race car collection in the gallery. Cars from the 1906 Grand Prix, through his collectibles of winners of the first 500 Mile Races, fascinated viewers. This outstanding collection filled all the gallery's display cases.

Exhibits will be changed in late summer with the Textile Display Room welcoming fall with a "Schools Days" Exhibit, covering the Victorian Era through the 1970's and the first floor showing of "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby."

The museum is looking forward to hosting the Modern Trends Home Economics Club and the Delta Kappa Gamma (women's honorary educational club), the GHS Class of 1957, and a museum volunteers' luncheon in October.

The museum's fifty-two volunteers are invaluable by keeping the museum open, working in the archival area, planning and setting up exhibits, serving luncheons and providing maintenance as needed. I am so grateful for their willingness to pitch-in when called. An addition to the regular volunteers has been Dustin White, a Purdue University undergraduate history major, working with Charity Mitchell in cataloging the archives.

The yard has been a challenge because of the intense summer heat. Kent Fenley generously provided ferns and annuals for the Franklin Street gardens.

With changing exhibits as well as the restored Victorian home to welcome you, do stop by during hours that the museum is open or call the office at 663-2764 on Tuesday or Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to arrange a private or group tour.

### GIFTS, GIFTS, AND MORE GIFTS

The society has many gifts for sale. A few examples are Christmas tree ornaments with historical buildings on each one, post cards, Decatur Co. afghans, and many other items. The Society is looking for someone to organize and further develop the gift shop. This could take a few hours a week up to any number of hours per week to make the gifts more available to the public. If this piques your interest, please call Charity Mitchell (663-5141), Linda Volk (663-5855) or the Society office (663-2764).

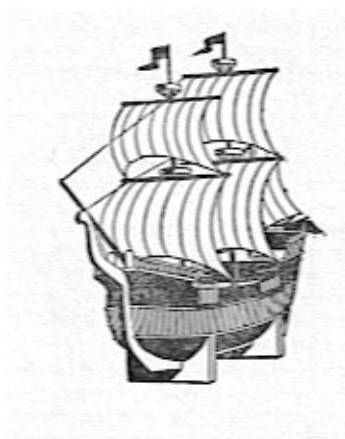
*(Continued from page 1)*

and Mrs. Dolly Mae Porter, Cincinnati

Funeral rites will be held at the home on McKee street Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock with the Rev. I. B. Morgan officiating, it was announced today. The body will be laid to rest in South Park cemetery \* with military honors, with the G.A.R. in charge. The family has requested that flowers be omitted.

\*Nathan Miller is buried in the GAR Soldiers Circle in row two facing south. This article is reprinted from the Greensburg Daily News, Mar 22,1928 issue. Edited by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian and Genealogist, July 23,2007

This is the 8<sup>th</sup> in a series of Obits about some early settlers, interesting people and some later well known men and women who lived here and died here in Decatur County. They are the ones who helped shape Decatur County into what we have today. In this way, they will always be remembered— R.W.



## *The Galley*

### Greensburg's Youth Center: The Early Years

By Eleanor F. Schuster

It was January 6, 1952, when the young people of Greensburg organized to appear the following night at the City Council meeting with a request that the city provide a youth center. Several attempts had been made in years past, but nothing had materialized from these earlier attempts. On January 7, 1952, the Council listened to the young people and the mayor appointed a committee to distinguish whether or not it was feasible. With the appointment of these adults, the young people agreed to wait for developments.

The committee investigated such things as location, control of such an organization, directors, estimated cost, parental support, and many other angles. It did not take them long to establish that it was feasible, and with the right support could be undertaken immediately. The next step was the appointment of two [additional] committees, one to work on the recommendations of the first group as to location, and the second to go out into the city and see what support could be secured. The door-to-door campaign one evening was a huge success, and with donations from organizations and business firms added to it, the youth center seemed a reality. The group seeking a location finally settled on the section of the K. of P. building formally occupied by the Palms Drug Store.

At this time the students elected five young people to the Governing Board and the Mayor appointed five adults to the Board. These ten people started working on details. They had to decide what equipment left by the Palms Drug Store they wished to retain and dispose [of] the rest. They had to work out a satisfactory lease with the owners of the building. The young people and the Director visited various other youth centers in Indiana to gather workable ideas. There were meetings with the Fire Marshall and with insurance companies.

As a part of their responsibility, the young people were charged with the duty of assisting with the renovation of the building. They scraped old paper from the walls, they painted old furniture, and washed windows. Contractors of Greensburg donated much time to revamping the interior. New partitions had to be installed for the two new restrooms at the rear of the building. The floors had to be sanded. New paper had to be put on the walls, and the ceiling had to be cleaned after new electrical fixtures were installed. A heating unit had to be installed as well as a hot water heater and some new fountain equipment. The doors had to have their hinges changed. The tile floor at the front had to be repaired. Everyone worked, and the young people held meetings before going to school as well as attending the daily Governing Board meetings.

The interior decorator held conferences with the young people on the governing Board, and from his inspiration they settled on the theme. The lower portion of the walls was turned into simulated wood reminiscent of hulls of old ships. The red and white stripes at the upper part are representative of the color of the sails of ships of by-gone days. Everywhere mementos of the deep-seas, nautical symbolism, and pirate lore, even to the gilded pirate chest, pick and shovel, give charm to the room where the Pirates and their friends meet. A contest was held to select a name for the youth center. One of the girls won the contest by suggesting "The Galley" for, she said, that was the part of a ship where people met to eat and enjoy fellowship.

As the Governing Board worked toward opening the Galley, the members realized the task of janitor work was a huge undertaking. The young people took on the task by suggesting that they take turns at this menial work. Each student must take his turn, or be excluded from the privileges of the Galley, and each Saturday finds a crew of young people doing their share.

The Governing Board of young people set up a series of Rules and formulated a code of behavior for attending the Galley. These rules have been revised as time deemed necessary for better working conditions within the student body. A membership card was drafted and membership fees established.

On May 6, 1952, just four months after the idea started, The Galley opened its doors for use by the young people of Greensburg. There was a parade around the Square led by the High School Band and a kick-off program in front of the building before the ribbon was cut and the doors opened. Approximately 25 persons per minute passed through the doors that first night to see what the youth center was like.

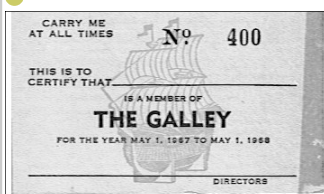
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After the first year the City took over the task of paying the rent, utilities, and the Director's salary. The Galley itself, from membership fees, Coke machine sales, juke box and soda fountain profits, takes care of the maintenance, repairs, and new equipment.

The Galley is something the city is proud of and the entire state is watching with interest. Membership has grown each year, but the Junior High department has suffered growing. However, the youth center was started as a Senior High venture, and they use The Galley three days and evenings each week. The Junior Highs use The Galley one day, or evening, a week, and it is hoped that through this use they will learn the value of The Galley, how it was worked for, and how it must be worked for now to retain it. The Galley is a place where youth learn how to get along with other people and share responsibilities. In the three years of operation, approximately 46,350 young people have made use of The Galley, and there is no apparent abuse to the building.

As a short statistical history, in 1955 there have been 208 Senior High memberships and 150 Junior High memberships. The average monthly attendance is 1,324 young people. From May, 1952, to May, 1953, 15,407 young people made use of The Galley. From May, 1953 to May, 1954, the number was 16,157. From May, 1954 to May, 1955, the figure was 14,735. These figures indicate that the young people of Greensburg appreciate their Galley, and to all those who assisted in the early stages of establishing it should go a vote of gratitude for their tireless efforts.



The following brief articles about The Galley's activities were published in the Greensburg High School's newspaper, *The Tree City Breeze*, on the dates indicated:

October 20, 1961:

Senior High Galley Board of Directors were elected Saturday, October 7. The new officers are president, Regina Hyatt; secretary, Linda Wall; treasurer, Dixie Schoenke; reporter, Pat Shuttlers, and fifth member, Tom Staples. Donna Shaffer is the president of Indiana State Youth Recreation Association.

January 12, 1962:

Approximately 150 high school and college students were entertained by a dance given at the Galley on Saturday, December 23, 1961, from 8:00 to 11:00 p.m. The Galley was decorated with a Spanish theme. A large decorated Christmas tree was in the window, just inside the door, and a colorful piñata, made by members of the Galley Board, was hung over the dance floor. It was decorated with holly and bells.

At 10:00 refreshments were served consisting of cookies, potato chips, and Cokes donated by Mr. and Mrs. Davis.

Later on in the evening there was a twist contest, in which many participated. The contest was won by Sharon Tompkins and David Phelps. They were rewarded with cash for their strenuous efforts.

February 21, 1962:

The annual Galley Sweetheart Dance was Saturday, February 10, from 7:00 to 10:45. It was decorated in accordance with the theme "Cupid's Capers." Many paper hearts were placed along the walls and on the lamps. In the middle of the dance floor hanging from the ceiling was a white bell with paper hearts hanging from it. The dance was semi-formal, with boys wearing coats and ties and the girls wearing party dresses.

April 6, 1962:

The Galley has become the unofficial meeting place for the Eagle Watcher's Club. On Tuesday, March 13, 1962, there was to be a meeting of the Eagle Watcher's Club at the post office but due to rain it was changed to the Galley. Harriet Klene, president, presided. Other meetings are to be scheduled.

New records at the Galley: "Johnny Angel" by Shelly Fabares and "I've Got Bonnie," by Bobby Rydell.

## **Towns and Villages of Decatur County: Reprints of Articles from early Twentieth Century Papers**

**Compiled and Edited by Russell Wilhoit**

### **Smyrna**

### **On the Old Plank Road**

*This article reprinted from the Nov, 1913-Greensburg News, edited and added to by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian, July 2007. This is the 8<sup>th</sup> in a series of articles reprinted about the small towns located in Decatur County, next issue we will take a trip over to **St. Omer** in Adams Twp.*

The town of Smyrna is located eight miles southeast of Greensburg on the old Michigan road, and has somewhat of an interesting history back into the “fifties” and “sixties,” when it had its general stores, blacksmith shops, post office, tavern, saloons, wild hogs, deer, wild turkey, wild pigeon roosts, etc., but as the writer proposes to make brief mention of each, they will be taken up in proper order and given with reference to dates, going first as far back as we can procure accurate dates, and following them on down to the present time.

#### **First Settler**

The first known white man to camp on the town site of Smyrna was an Irishman by the name of Michael Mulligan, and he and his family pitched their tent here seventy-two long years ago – in 1840 – when this place was a wilderness and entangled swamps, filled with wild animals such as bear, panthers, wild cats, catamounts, wild hogs, and deer by the droves as well as wild turkey and black, white, grey and fox squirrels in such vast numbers as to almost destroy or consume the settlers’ entire crop of corn.

Mr. Mulligan’s first work was that of clearing sufficient land on which to erect a log cabin, with brush, weeds and grass for a roof. When the cabin home was completed there was great joy among the members of his family which consisted of his wife, two sons and a daughter, for they moved into the cabin from their tented home which was composed of poles set with one end on a large log, the other resting on the ground with bark for a shelter or roof, and bed clothes hung up on either side of the walls.

This noble Irish family all worked – the wife and daughter doing out door work, assisting the men folks in felling and burning trees and brush, in ditching, and in an unreasonably short space of time they had quite a farm cleared and ready for cultivation.

They prospered for several years when the husband and father died and the mother and children sold their belongings and moved back to Kentucky from whence they came. Shortly after Mr. Mulligan, came Elija Elder, father of Frank Elder, (\*died-Jan-1939) of Greensburg, and he was

#### **The Most Prominent Citizen**

and foremost business man of them all. He was the first postmaster, the first man to keep tavern, first to run a saloon, first stock buyer and shipper, first man to own and operate a saw mill, first timber buyer and also conceded to be the wealthiest citizen within miles of the little hamlet, and concerning him and his various occupations we give the following:

Fifty-three years ago – in 1860 – Elija Elder owned and operated

#### **A Tavern and A Saloon**

in connection therewith. Farmers for miles southeast and southwest of Smyrna would employ from twenty-five to thirty men to help them drive great droves of hogs, as high as eight hundred to a thousand at a time via Smyrna through to Cincinnati, and with them they would have eight or ten wagons and teams to haul the hogs that would give out – haul them until they became rested, when they would be taken out and other tired hogs fill their places in the wagons. These farmers and hog drivers would all stop at the hotel Elder, turned their hogs into different lots and pastures, put up their tired teams and remain over night.

Some nights these hog dealers would lose as many as twenty-five or thirty head of hogs, their death being caused by the animals piling up in bunches and on top of each other, smothering out their very lives.

These dead hogs they left with Mr. Elder, who would skin them and sell the skins in the Cincinnati markets to be made into horse collars; the bodies of the dead animals were cut into small pieces and rendered into grease which was used for making oils, barreled and shipped to Cincinnati.

*(Continued on page 7)*

(Continued from page 6)

### **Cheap Whiskey**

Mr. Elder not only did “a land office business” with his hotel but with his saloon as well.

With three or four yoke of oxen he would go to Lawrenceburg and return with wagon loads of whiskey which he retailed at one cent per drink or wholesaled at twelve and a half cents per gallon, and it is said that many the man who walked into Mr. Elder’s place with a coon skin in hand, laid it down upon the bar and walked out with a gallon of whisky – both Mr. Elder and the owner of the coon skin believing that a “fair change was not robbery.”

### **Sold Wild Hogs**

When the ground was covered with snow enough to enable Mr. Elder to track wild hogs, he would employ four or five men, and together with a number of dogs, wagons and teams, they would hie themselves to the nearby woods, trail and catch wild hogs to the number of fifty or more, load them into the wagon beds covered over and weighted down with timber, haul them home, place them in large, high pens, feed, fatten, kill, dress, and ship by rail from Smith’s Crossing to Cincinnati.

### **Sold Wild Pigeons**

During the “sixties” wild pigeons nested by the thousands in the woods on the farm of William Koeingkramer, two miles east of Smyrna, and hatched their young by the tens of thousands.

Mr. Elder would take his two-horse wagon, cover the bed with muslin, drive to the woods and pigeon roosts, strike the body of a tree with an ax when the young pigeons or squabs, would jump from their nests, fall to the ground when he would pick them up, place them in the wagon bed under the muslin cover, and when he had all he cared for would drive back home, place the squabs in corn pens and coops, and when they grew to be of good size and full feathered, would place them in coops and ship to Cincinnati markets. It is said he marketed as high as three thousand at a time and for good prices.

### **Operated Saw Mill**

During the “seventies” Mr. Elder operated a saw mill here – and it was “a sure enough old timer,” being an up-and-down saw, and he did a flourishing business sawing lumber for building steam boats and finishing sills for steamboats also. He also made lathe. This material he shipped to Cincinnati and other markets.

### **First Postmaster**

Mr. Elder was also the first postmaster at Smyrna, receiving his appointment in 1860. But, adieu to the Senior Mr. Elder, and we pass to the Junior, his son Frank:

### **Killed Forty-eight Geese**

There is quite an aged and highly respected lady residing not “more than a thousand miles” from Smyrna, who has a very distinct recollection that Elijah Elder had a son by the name of Frank; that said son Frank now resides in Greensburg; that he once owned a Scottish Terrier dog; that said dog killed forty-eight geese in one night’s time, and that one night was just thirty-eight years ago last night; and that said geese were the property of one – well, thereby hangs “more of a tale” than the News scribe is going to tell.

### **First Store**

Henry Carney owned the first store in the town; it was in 1861, and a log building housed his general stock of goods.

A blacksmith shop was operated here in 1856 by John Runyon, who managed it until 1861, when John Buckley became proprietor and operated it for twenty years, until just prior to his death.

As early as 1852 Smyrna had a saloon and Henry Carney was the proprietor, bar tender, etc., and remained in the business for ten years.

In 1868 a gentleman known as and called by the name of: Old Preacher Tower,” conducted a general store here in the building yet standing and is the first house north of Daniel Buckley’s house. Frank Elder, now of Greensburg, was the proprietor of a general store in the town and also served as postmaster thirty years ago.

(Continued on page 8)



(Continued from page 7)

### The Smyrna of Today

The Smyrna of today has no saloons, stores, blacksmith shops, taverns, post office, churches, no schools nor wild animals – not even a blind tiger, but it has a host of good citizens who are abundantly satisfied to do their buying and selling in Greensburg .

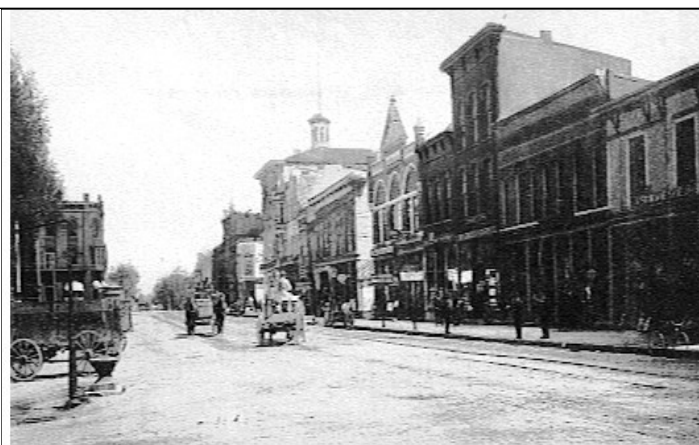
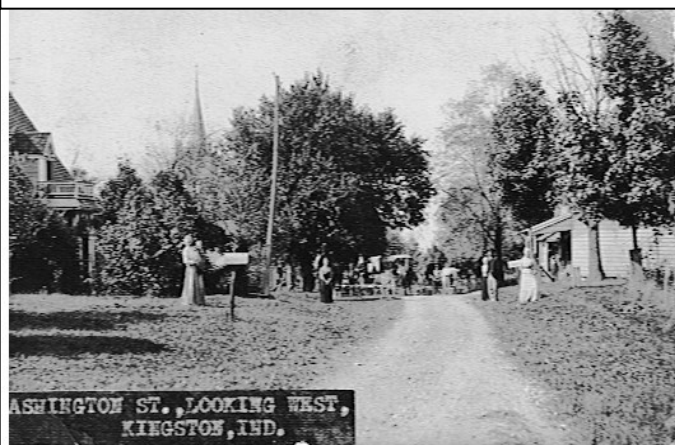
\*notes, Frank Elder is buried in Sand Creek Cemetery, the other names mentioned I could not find their burial spots, most likely in unmarked graves in the little cemetery near Smyrna, in which very few markers are still standing not having survived the Indiana weather. RW



These pictures are from Smyrna in 2007. They represent the main activities in the area today.



### Vintage Postcards



This is a third in a series from my personal postcard collection of Greensburg and Decatur County .

Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian.

Do you have old family documents and pictures? Do you have clothing that is historical . Do not throw them away!! The Historical Society of Decatur County would like to make copies of your documents, diaries and pictures. Also, the museum is looking for donations of old floor lamps that could be used as bases for the manikins that we are making. If you have anything that we might find useful, please call Susan or Charity at 663-2764.



## Historical Society of Decatur County Coming Events

### EXHIBITS

#### August– October, 2007

**“You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby”** – A collection of baby items donated by members of the community.

(Exhibit created by Ginny Garvey and Helen Hamilton).

**Textile Exhibit Room - “School Days”**– Graduation dresses, school clothes and other textiles

(Exhibit created by Nita McCoy and Susan Ricke).

#### November - December, 2007

**“I’ll Be Home for Christmas”** - (Exhibit created by Ginny Garvey, Helen Hamilton, Reed Schuster)

### GALLERY

#### August—October, 2007

**Educational Memorabilia**

**A Small Collection of Paintings by Local Artists**

**September 30th- Fifth Sunday—Greensburg High Musical Ensemble, 2:30 p.m. First Presbyterian Church. (See below)**

**November 5th to November 30th - Hoosier Art Salon in the Gallery**

**Courtesy of Arts and Cultural Council of Decatur County**

**December 8th and 9th - Annual Christmas Open House/Model Train Exhibit in the Gallery**

#### *Fifth Sunday Musicals*

**September 30. Greensburg Junior High School Musical Ensemble directed by Nick Parcell.** He will lead his students, forty in number, into the sound of the classics for the young. Enjoy their music! In fact this will be their 3<sup>rd</sup> presentation ... Welcome back G.J.H.S.M.E.

This is a special musical dedicated to the Red Hat Society.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend. First Presbyterian Church 2:30 p.m. All are welcome. Admission is free with a good will offering being taken.

Editor of the Bulletin

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E-mail articles and ideas to  
Email: [gholt@core.com](mailto:gholt@core.com)

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Batesville, IN 47006

**"The Bulletin"**



Society's Officers

President: Tom Barker  
Vice-President: Linda Volk  
Treasurer: Debbie Greiwe  
Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier  
Recording Secretary: Charity Mitchell

Board of Directors

Roy Connor	Ginny Garvey
Mike McCoy	Polly Matlock
Bryan Robbins	Lynda Smith
Jim Rosenberry	Dennis Wilson

Society's Agent

William H. Robbins

Museum Director

Diana Springmier

Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 -April thru December

Museum office: 663-2764

Email: [dechissoc@core.com](mailto:dechissoc@core.com)

After hours, call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Society est. 1957  
Museum est. 1984



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Historical Society of Decatur County  
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Greensburg, IN 47240



# Historical Society of Decatur County

## The Bulletin

Vol. 12 No. 4

Winter 2007

Greensburg, Indiana

### Epigraph-

*There is one day that is ours. There is one day when all we Americans go back to the old home to eat saleratus biscuits and marvel how much nearer to the porch the old pump looks than it used to ...Thanksgiving Day...is the one day that is purely American.*

*- William Sydney Porter  
(O. Henry) 1907*

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### Rev. Joseph Tarkington (1800-1891)

*This is the 8<sup>th</sup> is a series of obituaries about some of the early pioneers/settlers and later well-known men and women who lived and died and are buried here in Decatur County. They are the ones who helped shape the county and this city into what we have today. In this way we can still honor their memory.*

*Edited and added to by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian & Genealogist, Oct. 15, 2007*

Rev. Joseph Tarkington, the oldest Methodist minister in Indiana, and well known to the people of this State died at his residence near this city on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 1891, in the ninety-first year of his age. He had been ill for several days and as it became apparent that his life was nearing its close, the absent members of the family were notified, and when the end came all save one were at the bedside of the venerable sufferer.

Although it was know that Father Tarkington had reached and passed the full and rounded measure of man's allotted years, and that his death might occur at any time. Still when the sad news came that he had passed it was a shock to our people, who had learned to love the reverend gentleman as they loved a father.

After years of hardship in the wilds of an unsettled country, of trials and vexations in his laborious duties as a circuit rider through wild wastes of woods, he lived to see the country formerly infested by savages and wild beasts transformed into broad and fertile fields and saw the tall spires of a thousand churches rise and point heavenward like silent indexes directing the wandering sinner on his way to God.

Rev. Joseph Tarkington was born at Nashville, Tenn., Oct. 30, 1800. His great-grandfather came from England to the colony of Carolina early in the last century. After several unsuccessful attempts to settle in Alabama, Mr. Tarkington's father moved to Indiana Territory in October, 1815, settling after nearly two years' wandering along the banks of the lower White river, on a quarter section adjoining the present town of Stanford, in Monroe county. Here the family endured all the privations of frontier life. His early educational and religious privileges were poor. There were few schools and preachers, but he made the most of these. In August, 1820, he was converted at a camp-meeting, five miles west of Bloomington, and in the following June joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, after having investigated as best he could the creeds and politics of the several churches in the neighborhood. Almost immediately he was made a class leader, then an exhorter, then a local preacher. In these several capacities he served with such ability that, without his seeking it, he was taken from the Bloomington college which he had entered as a student, and late in the fall of 1824 he was taken to the Boonville circuit as a supply minister, the cir-



(Continued on page 4)

## President's Letter

Recently I was searching through a videotape of aerial shots of Decatur County I filmed in 1990. I ran across an exceptional clip taken by a motion picture camera strapped to Brent Milhon's bi-wing crop-duster aircraft as it flew at very low altitude right over the top of the courthouse tower. The plane continues on towards the northwest following US 421 towards Pleak's Hill. The terrain was just like it is in my memory. It is striking the changes that have taken place in just these few short years since 1990. In the film, the courthouse is a different color and somewhat smaller. And the edge of town is at the SR 3 by-pass. Looking northwest towards Adams is this vast expanse of green. The film runs out at that point. I wish it could have captured the fly-over all the way to Adams. How different that fly-over would be today.

The county is going through extraordinary changes right now. Having lived in the Adams area most of my life, what I have been watching unfold this past year is surreal. Roads that were not there yesterday suddenly are. Roads that have been used for over 150 years are buried forever. Highways, overpasses, giant towers, and mammoth steel-girded structures are materializing at light-speed. And this is just the start. I can only wonder what the county is going to look like in five or ten years. One thing is certain. It will never look like it did in 1990.

I joined the Historical Society so that I could help preserve our community's history. My contributions have been mostly motion pictures and still images. I have been fortunate in having been able to acquire a significant collection of images of the county during the twentieth century. In time, all of these images will be available at the museum to anyone who has an interest in the county's history. In the future people are going to wonder what Greensburg was like before the current industrial revolution. Because of the dedication of the Historical Society's volunteers, staff, officers, and members, they will be able to see.

The Society's Annual Dinner and Program will be in April instead of February. The weather is nicer in April. As part of the program, I hope to show the film Charles Platt made of the Greensburg Kiwanis Club in 1941. Plus, we can take a look at Greensburg from the air in 1990. Lots going on at the museum with the holidays approaching. Toy trains and more! The exhibits are always changing at the museum. You must come several times a year to take it all in. Greensburg and Decatur County are indeed fortunate.

Tom Barker, President

Historical Society of Decatur County

**Don't forget - HSDC dues are payable on the first of January**

Membership rates are as follows:

Circle type of membership at left.

Student \$ 10.00 per year

Individual \$ 15.00 per year

Family \$ 25.00 per year

Patron \$ 50.00 per year

Historian \$100.00 per year

Lifetime \$500.00 (one-time payment)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues

## *Museum Musings* by Diana Springmier

The Decatur County Historical Museum honored its volunteers with a "Ghosts in the Museum" luncheon in late October. Helen Hamilton, retiring volunteer chairperson, was recognized for her years of scheduling the volunteers. Also recognized were the efforts of Dennis Wilson - maintenance, Charity Mitchell-Museum librarian, Ginny Garvey-display chairperson, Nita McCoy-textile management, Lois Carol McCormack and Carrie Shumaker-cataloguing, Judy Muckerheide-archival assistant, Debbie Greiwe-Society treasurer, Susan Wilson, Polly McCreary, Joyce Springmier, and Sharon Wickens -Museum cleaning staff, and Jane Brown- Museum caterer.

During November, the Museum gallery is exhibiting the Hoosier Art Salon paintings sponsored by the Arts and Cultural Council of Decatur County. The ACCDC and the Museum jointly hosted a preview party in early November.

Because of the warm autumn weather, it's hard to accept that the holiday season is just around the corner. The Museum's annual Christmas Open House will be Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, from 1-4 P.M. Our 1850 Victorian home will be decorated in keeping with this year's theme: "I'll be Home for Christmas." Holiday music, provided by both students and adults, will add to the festivities along with Gladys Pike's delectable bread pudding and cookies served with tasty punch provided by Museum volunteers. The north parlor's Christmas tree will be decorated with ornaments made by 162 elementary art students under the direction of their teacher, Margaret Parker. These students will visit the Museum the first week of December.

Of special interest to children, parents, and grandparents will be the operating Lionel trains set up and displayed by the Decatur County High Rail Railroad Club. This exhibit will fill the upstairs gallery. For a child of the early to mid-twentieth century, an electric train set was the ultimate Christmas present.

Visiting the Museum with your friends and family in December will most certainly put you in the spirit!

### ***Museum Gift Shop***

The newest book available is "A Brief History of the Underground for Escaping Slaves in Decatur County." It is authored by William O. Smith. It is a brief history of the underground Railroad, which is the movement of fugitive slaves through Decatur County in the 1800's. It includes many citizens of Decatur County who helped with the transfer of slaves.

There are two new ornaments on sale in the Gift Shop. The 2008 ornament is the "Greensburg Post Office." The other new ornament is the "Tree on the Courthouse Tower" which doesn't have a year on it. Still available in the gift shop are the many beautiful ornaments including the 2005 Christmas Ornaments of the "Odd Fellows Home 1900." These turned out to be lovely pearl ornaments and are only \$8.00. Our 2006 Christmas Ornament of "Springhill Church" are still in stock. These are beautiful two sided ornaments which show the original church and the current church. There are also ornaments from past years which are "on-sale" for bargain prices. Don't miss out on these; once they are gone, they are gone. Great for the collector in the family.

New and very popular are the Towers and Steeples of Decatur County calendars for 2008. These calendars are illustrated with beautiful pictures by Tom Barker of actual steeples taken here in Decatur County..

The 1886 maps of Greensburg are a delight to all who have seen them. They are available in the gift shop for \$20.00. These are suitable for framing and are sure to make excellent gifts for the history buff in your family.

**Historical Society Museum Gift Shop , 222 N. Franklin**

**Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 10:00 to 2:00 ; Sundays 1:00 to 4:00**

Rev. Joseph Tarkington (Continued from page 1)

cuit embracing Warrick, Spencer and Perry counties. In the fall of 1825 he joined the Illinois Conference, then embracing the State of Indiana, from which time, for more than forty years, he took an active part in the work of a Methodist traveling preacher. A few of his first years were within the towns of the State of Illinois, but after 1828 his work lay within the State of Indiana and was mostly in the southern part of the State. At the conference held in Madison in 1828 he was appointed to the White-Lick circuit, embracing most of the territory lying between Indianapolis and Greencastle in a strip about thirty miles wide. On his way from the conference his horse died about thirty miles south of Indianapolis. Nothing daunted, he shouldered his saddle-bags and walked into the town, an itinerant preacher on foot. In the fall of 1831 he was married to Maria Slawson, in Switzerland County. The wedding tour was unique, or at least would be these days. Mounted on two strong horses, with all of their earthly goods in two well-filled saddle-bags, they rode to the bridegroom's father's in Monroe County through rain part of the way. The road from Madison to Columbus was through an inhabited country, but from Columbus to Bloomington it lay within Brown County, almost a wilderness. One night they stayed in the cabin of the salt-boilers at the old salt works, with nothing to eat but one biscuit that had remained from the breakfast of the day prepared at Columbus and no bed but the bunk of the settler. When about sixty years of age Mr. Tarkington asked to be left without an appointment by the conference that he might do mission work in Indianapolis, under the auspices of the Ames Institute, an association of young Methodists, representing all the Methodist churches in the city. He continued in this work two years, preaching and organizing suburban churches. Some of the points selected by him as bases of operations have since become strong congregations. He organized the Ames church in a tabernacle made of board from Camp Carrington barracks; and the Hall Place church from the school house on Tinker, now Seventh Street. It subsequently built a frame church on Third street returning to the corner of Seventh and Hall Place several years ago.

Few men have had a more eventful and useful life. His early life was amid wolves and Indians, and was devoted to the hard work of making a farm in the timber lands of southern Indiana; by middle life to the hard work of preaching on large circuits and on short allowance, but in all, he was a marked success. Early, when lands were cheap, he made a fortunate investment in a small farm near Greensburg, furnishing him a home after the active years of his life were passed.

His wife died, December 26, 1889, aged 83 years, 10 months, and 24 days. He leaves a brother, Wm. C. Tarkington, of Indianapolis, a sister, Mrs. Mary P. Whaley, of Southport, Ind., and five children: Judge John Tarkington, Will S. Tarkington and Mrs. Daniel Stewart of Indianapolis; Dr. Joseph A. Tarkington, of Washington, D.C., M. S. Tarkington, of Tulare, Cal., and Mrs. J. H. Alexander, of this city.

The funeral services were held Thursday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock at the First M.E. church, and were conducted by Rev. E. B. Rawls. A deputation of the deceased's aged co-workers in the Master's cause came up from Conference, in session at Aurora, and paid their sad tribute to their beloved brother. The ministers were Rev. E. L. Dolph, of Lawrenceburg; Rev. J. Cotton, of Moore's Hill; Rev. John Q. Chafee, of Indianapolis, Rev. John W. Mellender, of Glenwood, and Rev. W. W. Snyder. The floral offerings were numerous and beautiful. The remains were interred in the family lot in South Park and were followed to their last resting place by a large concourse of sorrowing citizens.

A good man has gone to his reward. Peace to his ashes.

*You can read his autobiography (1899-Pioneer Methodist Preachers of Indiana) in the Indiana Room at the Greensburg Library, an interesting book, if you would like to find out more about the man and his travels through early Indiana. His grandson was Booth Tarkington, (1869-1946) one of the well-known Indiana authors around the turn of the century (1900). Booth Tarkington's most famous book was "The Gentleman from Indiana." (RW)*

Please note: In the last *Bulletin* we promised you that we would be visiting the town of St. Omer in Adams Township in this issue. Due to space restrictions, we will continue Russell Wilhoit's series on "Cities and Towns in Decatur County" in a later issue of the *Bulletin*.



## *The Wrong Santa Claus*

By Nick Williams

It was three weeks before Christmas, 1951, during the cherry pie course of a wonderful after-church-fried-chicken-dinner, when my grandparents, Howard and Bertha Williams, suggested to me, my mother Bert, and my father, Lowell Williams, that it might be nice to go downtown and see Santa Claus, who would be at the Courthouse Square the following Saturday. Perhaps "we" could have "our" picture taken with Santa.

The important words in this "suggestion" were "we" and "our," because it didn't mean Grandpa, Grandma, Mom, Dad and Nickey (a name I hated although everyone in my family used it) would all be in the picture. No, only Nickey would climb on Santa's lap and get "his" picture taken. Well, I liked this Santa guy, or at least what I had heard about him, so this was agreeable with me, as if I had any say in the matter.

My Grandpa Howard was called "Butch" by most people who knew him as a friendly jab in the ribs about his barbering expertise. Everyone in town knew, liked, and respected Grandpa Howard-as everyone in town also knew, liked, and respected my Grandma Bertha and my parents. We had returned to my grandparents' home from services at the Greensburg Methodist Episcopal Church where we had all sat together in the seventh pew on the left-hand side of the sanctuary. Ruth and George Collicut, who wore his suit pants belted half-way up his rib cage; and Ed and Jane Taylor, as well as Alben and Etta Wood-who had the grocery store on the west side of the square-all sat behind us. Tom and Evelyn Hess and their daughter Sandy, and her big brother Jim, all sat in front of us.

Reverend Guy Carpenter, who had received his religious schooling at DePauw University and Duke University Seminary in North Carolina was our minister. All the people of our church and, indeed, all the people of our community loved him. He was a young, always happy, and gregarious man who had recently been given a very prestigious global award by the Hans Christian Andersen Society for his exceptional contributions to children's poverty causes, and for his writings on their behalf. Reverend Carpenter wanted all the children in his congregation to call him "Uncle Guy," but because of his city-wide acceptance, all the Greensburg "kids" called him that, too. Uncle Guy and his wife would be traveling the following Spring to Copenhagen on an all-expenses paid trip to receive his extraordinary award on a world-wide stage.

Uncle Guy was deeply loved by all the children. He was so pleased to have the youngsters in the sanctuary for the Sunday services, but he told us that just in case we became bored with his "too long" sermons, we should just count all of the objects that came in threes-like the windows, the carvings, the candles, beams, braces, and even the tassels on the altar coverings. If we did this, he said, "You will still be worshipping Our Lord, His Father, and His Spirit." At the same time, of course, we stayed awake, and this really impressed our parents and grandparents. I loved going to church and Sunday School so much that I received attendance award pins and bars each year, and most of my friends did as well. However, I hated the long, fancy double-breasted green, gray, and brown Eton suit-coats with the matching short pants and short brimmed cap. Mom bought me three sets so I wouldn't have to wear the same one every week. To make it worse, the extra shiny shoes hurt my feet, and the necktie was intolerable!

Sometimes on Sundays after I was seven, I was allowed to walk up Central Avenue to Broadway and then to the church by myself. That was wonderful independence because it gave me the chance to hide my stupid short-billed cap under the bushes in front of Jared Fogg's house. If Grandma asked me where my cap was, I crossed my fingers and said, "I forgot it."

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That year Uncle Guy asked Mom and the late Carrie O'Hara Page Morrison-one of Indiana's most respected artists-to gather garlands and decorate the church sanctuary for the upcoming Christmas services. Other mothers helped, too, and since the decorating was after school, several kids "helped out." It was great fun! We put two giant fir trees up front, placed garland on the altar, wreathes over the windows, and gold and white sparkling lights on all the greenery. (Have you ever noticed that in many churches after you enter the *front* door you're immediately at the *back*? Is this so no one is embarrassed for coming in late?) People brought commemorative Mexican poinsettias in honor of departed relatives to decorate the communion rail and altar. It was truly special.

All during that week I was making a list of presents to ask Santa for on Saturday when we went to see him. At the top of the list, of course, even though I wasn't a farm kid and knew I'd never get one, was a Red Ryder BB Rifle...or at least a "Whamo-slingshot." A new leather football and a helmet would be great; new marbles to shoot at school during recess in the Spring; and it sure would be great to get a "Stan-the Man Musial" outfielder's glove, and some games, books, and *surprises!* I guess some new clothes, too (just as well ask for them-I'd get them, anyway.)

Finally Saturday came and, wouldn't you know it, I had to wear my silly Eton church suit to see Santa Clause. Oh man, what could be worse? I'll bet Jimmy Joe Nelson wouldn't have to wear his church suit, but when I got there, I saw he did, so, it wasn't too bad. Santa seemed like a nice old guy -laughed kinda funny. He rode into town on the fire engine with all its bells, siren, and flashing lights, and someone had built him a little red house to sit in front of while he talked to us kids. He had some girl elves keeping everyone in line, handing out candy canes, and taking pictures of the kids on Santa's knee.

Grandma Bertha and Grandpa Howard and Mom and Dad looked real happy. All I wanted to do was take off my tie and silly Eton suit. Still, the candy canes were good, and Santa said he'd do his best to bring what I wanted for Christmas; and since Jimmy Joe, Timmy Robbins, and Freddy Jones had to wear their suits too, I guess it was an okay day.

When Christmas morning came, I figured there had to be a mistake. Instead of a Red Ryder BB Rifle, I got a toy gun that shot ping-pong balls. I did get my football and helmet, though, and even my Stan-the-Man outfielder's glove and socks and books and *stuff!*

I had to know: "Dad," I asked, "Is there only one Santa Clause?"

In his most politically correct diplomatic voice, Dad said, "Well, I know Santa has a lot of helpers who dress like him, so he can be in lots of places at the same time."

Then it came to me. "Mom," I said, "I think I know what the problem was with the BB gun."

"What's that," Mom asked.

"I think they sent the wrong Santa Claus," I said, "and by the way, did you notice how much Santa looked like Ernest McGee, the insurance man who comes into Grandpa's barber shop? He had the same kind of glasses and everything."

Then Mom said, "Well, Mr. Nick, instead of thinking about that, maybe you should be thinking more about what Uncle Guy says Christmas is truly all about." Yep, Mom was right again.

## Representative Consumer Costs in the Early 1950's

### Grocery Prices

Bread...15 cents  
Campbell's Soup...10 cents per can  
Coffee...99 cents per lb.  
Eggs...51 cents per dozen  
Ground beef...34 cents per lb.  
Ivory soap...27 cents per 2 bars  
Milk...1 gallon for 92 cents

### Other Costs

2 story home w/ basement...\$22,000-\$25,000 (national prices)  
(a worker earning only \$50-\$100 a week could buy a two-bedroom, living room, kitchen and bath home of app. 1000 square feet for \$6000-\$8000)

Medium priced car (a Packard)...\$2000-\$2500  
Car battery...\$11.00  
Gasoline...23 cents per gallon  
1<sup>st</sup> class postage stamp...3 cents  
Mortgage rates...3.25% (30 year mortgages now allowed)  
Dress...\$7.98-\$25.00  
Kelvinator refrigerator...\$250-300  
Emerson T.V....\$129.95 (10 cents a day on payments)



## Hats Off to reed

What fun was the September 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Musical, the last of the 2007 season! Who would have thought of honoring the fun-loving senior citizen Red Hats, flaunting their red and purple finery, with a program of 50's music presented by the twelve and thirteen year-olds from the Greensburg Junior High School Band? That idea was wonderfully typical of reed Schuster, clad in his red shirt, whose innovative plan was carried through to perfection.



Under Nick Parcell's direction, Candy Acra's presentation of just what constitutes membership in this ostentatious group, and Jane Brown, sharing her culinary talents in the iced cookies of various shapes, the September Sunday afternoon in the Presbyterian Church was an unforgettable one as parents, grandparents and guests filled the church pews.

## Annual Christmas Open House - Sunday December 9th

Musical Program - Willadene Wood and Bob Rooker 1:00 to 1:30 and 2:30 to 3:00

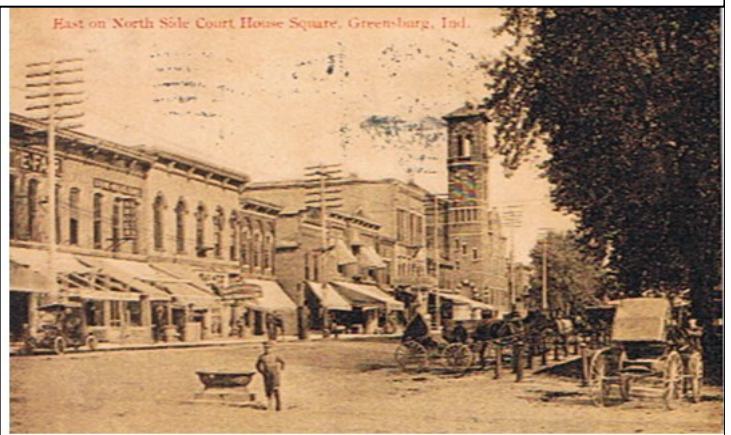
Greensburg Junior High School Musical Ensemble with Nick Parcell 2:00 to 2:30

Paul Minning playing the 1875 four-square grand piano 3:00 to 4:00

## Vintage Postcards



This is a fourth in a series from my personal postcard collection of Greensburg and Decatur County. Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian. Clarksburg School, circa 1910.



North side of the courthouse square circa 1914. Note the car on the left and the horse and buggy on the right. The little boy in the foreground is near a watering trough for horses.

If you are having trouble reading your copy of the bulletin, we now have large print copies available. Just call the office to let us know if you would like to sign up.

## Historical Society of Decatur County Coming Events

### EXHIBITS

#### Textile Exhibit Room

Through November 30th

**“School Days”**– Graduation dresses, school clothes and other textiles  
belonging to the society

December 1st through March 31st

**“Baby It’s Cold Outside”** - a display of baby clothes belonging to the Society  
(Exhibits created by Nita McCoy and Susan Ricke)

#### Museum

November - December, 2007

**“I’ll Be Home for Christmas”**  
(Exhibit created by Ginny Garvey and Helen Hamilton)

#### Gallery

November 5th to November 30th

**Hoosier Art Salon**

(Courtesy of Arts and Cultural Council of Decatur County)

**December 8th from 1:00 to 7:00 - December 9th from 1:00 to 4:00**  
**Annual Christmas Open House and Model Train Exhibit**



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**"The Bulletin"**



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Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier  
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Jim Rosenberry	Dennis Wilson

Society's Agent

William H. Robbins

Museum Director

Diana Springmier

Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00  
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 -April thru December  
Museum office: 663-2764  
Email: [dechissoc@etczone.com](mailto:dechissoc@etczone.com)  
After hours, call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Society est. 1957  
Museum est. 1984



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